

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) delivered a speech at the National Geographic Society Headquarters to commemorate World Environment Day and call on the Bush administration to demonstrate global leadership at this year's G8 meeting in Germany. Congressman Blumenauer, a member of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, returned last week from a trip to Greenland, Germany and Great Britain where he and other Representatives, including Speaker Pelosi, met with leading scientists and political leaders who are working to combat global warming.

"Large corporations, colleges and universities, and state and local governments in the U.S. are leading the way in the fight against global warming; it is time for Congress and the Bush administration to step up to the table," said Congressman Blumenauer. "Glaciers are disappearing, global temperatures are rising, and extreme weather events are intensifying. Yet the Bush administration and Congressional skeptics are still clinging to the remote possibility that scientists are wrong, a position that is increasingly out of step with ordinary US citizens for whom global warming is a real and increasing worry. The U.S. has been the largest polluter for the past 100 years, and since carbon dioxide remains in the atmosphere for decades, our legacy will linger. On a per capita level, Americans emit more than six times more carbon dioxide than the Chinese. It only makes sense for us to take the lead in reducing our footprint.

"Today, on World Environment Day, and as we approach this year's G8 summit, the United States must demonstrate true leadership and cooperation on the world stage, which means accepting a real target. Chancellor Merkel of Germany and others are urging President Bush to accept a proposal that limits global warming to two degrees Celsius. Last week the President, however, announced his own plan that fails to respond to the severity of the crisis. The President should abandon his non-productive and potentially disastrous game of chicken by providing real leadership and cooperation on the world stage and by working within the UN process."